

Goal Setting for Your Land

Start with your family:

Part of the family conversation should include a discussion of goals for the farm rental. Different family members are going to have different needs and desires. Whether your family makes decisions by consensus, or by a vote with input from all members, or by a decision of the senior generation; it is still important to understand the varying goals that family members may have.

Values are central:

What is most important to you that relates to how you want to manage your farmland? Such values might include continuing the family heritage of stewardship, conservation, community, financial stability, or passing the land on in better shape.

Some possible farm rental goals:

- Gain maximum dollar value from the property
- Gain enough dollar value from the property
- Provide for needs of retiring farmers & heirs
- Help a family member get started farming
- Help a non-related beginning farmer get started
- Build soil-health to steward the farm as an asset
- Minimize polluted runoff from the farm
- Bring Livestock back with more perennial cover for wildlife

Family goal-setting activity:

It can be hard to start up a family conversation about goals and have everyone comfortable about being honest. One fun and painless method to get started is to have people vote anonymously, using colored dot stickers.

Here's how:

At a family gathering --perhaps over the holidays -- print out these goals on sheets of paper. Put them someplace where people can get to them easily, perhaps on a bathroom wall, and give everyone a set of dot stickers. Ask your family members to "vote" by putting stickers on the goals of their choice.

Based on material from Farm Transitions Toolkit developed in 2013 by Land Stewardship Project, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, National Center for Appropriate Technology, and Farmers' Legal Action Group.